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CONTACT:
Ryan Barber
(276) 666-8659

Virginia Museum of Natural History to Host Annual Indian Festival

22nd annual event to feature Native American crafts, demonstrations, more

MARTINSVILLE, Va. (September 8, 2006) – The Virginia Museum of Natural History’s 22nd annual Indian Festival will be held on Saturday, September 16 from noon to 5 p.m. at 65 West Main Street in Uptown Martinsville. Native Americans in full regalia, host and guest drums, jingle, fancy, and hoop dancers will headline the event. In addition to the performers, the festival includes weapons and lifestyles demonstrations, children’s activities, crafts and vendors.

A ceremonial powwow begins at noon and will feature a grand entry procession of many tribal affiliations, including chiefs, head dancers, elders, and children. Master of Ceremonies Powhatan Red Cloud Owen will direct the activities in the arena and will explain the symbolism, protocol, and spiritual meanings of the dances, regalia and drums to the spectators. “Rick Youngblood and the Birdchoppers” will serve as host drums for the event.

Traditional traders and crafters will be on hand with authentic arts and crafts that illustrate the cultural heritage of the different tribes. A variety of demonstrations and children’s activities will be offered throughout the day and the public will be invited to join in the friendship dances in the arena..

The festival is sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Natural History along with Embarq, the City of Martinsville, and The Pepsi Bottling Group.

Admission for the festival is \$7 for adults; \$6 for seniors and college students; \$5 for children and youth 3-18; members and children under 3 free. In case of rain, the festival will be held adjacent to Jim Mills Nissan at 4760 Greensboro Rd. in Ridgeway. For more information contact VMNH at 276-666-8600 or visit our Web site at www.vmnh.net.

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville seeks to increase understanding of and appreciation for the natural history of the Commonwealth through education, research, collections, publications and exhibits. The museum – an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution – is accredited by the American Association of Museums, a distinction earned by fewer than 10 percent of museums in the United States. A new, \$28 million museum currently is being built in Martinsville. When fully completed in early 2007, the new museum will offer five times the exhibit and public space of the current facility.

The museum is a member of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, Virginia Association of Museums, Heritage Preservation, and an agency of the Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia. With 22 million objects in its collection, it reaches nearly 1 million people annually through on-site and traveling exhibitions, classroom outreach programs, the museum's Web site, public events and publications.

The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. Members are always admitted free. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$4 for senior citizens and youth 12-18; \$3 for children 3 to 11; and free for children 2 and under. For more information about membership or volunteer opportunities, please call 276-666-8600 or visit the museum's Web site at www.vmnh.net.

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